

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
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* TURKEY CROP DOWN THIS YEAR *

Farmers are raising 34,667,000 turkeys this year, 16 percent less than last year according to the preliminary estimate of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. This is the smallest crop since 1943, but is 5 percent above the 1939-43 average. Unfavorable price relationships, unusually large storage stocks at the end of last season, high feed costs, and the uncertainty of 1947 turkey prices for the heavy marketing season caused the sharp decrease in numbers this year. In 1946, prices broke sharply after Thanksgiving and did not recover. Heavy toms were difficult to move even under a price differential, in some cases, as high as 20 cents per pound. The decrease this year would have been even greater except that many breeders and hatcherymen, unable to dispose of their eggs or poults, elected to grow them out themselves. This was particularly true in the Pacific Coast States. Producers' intentions on January 1 also pointed to a crop 16 percent below a year ago.

All States except New Mexico, Georgia and Rhode Island show decreases in turkeys raised compared with a year ago. The West North Central States are raising 20 percent fewer turkeys than last year. All States in this region are down sharply with decreases ranging from 10 percent in North Dakota to 30 percent in South Dakota. Decreases in the Western States range from 13 percent in Arizona to 30 percent in Montana, with the whole region down 16 percent. The number of turkeys raised in 1947 compared with a year ago shows decreases for the South Atlantic States of 16 percent, South Central States 15 percent, East North Central States 11 percent and the North Atlantic States 8 percent.

The five leading turkey States in the order named are: California, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa and Oregon. These States which account for 44 percent of the turkeys being raised in 1947 are producing 16 percent fewer birds than last year. Decreases by States are California 15 percent, Texas 13 percent, Minnesota 17 percent, Iowa and Oregon 20 percent.

The 1947 season began with 20 percent fewer breeder hens on farms than a year earlier. However, it soon became apparent that there would be an ample supply of hatching eggs to meet the reduced demand for poults. The hatching season started out dull and did not recover. The sharp jump in feed prices in March coupled with the uncertainty of turkey prices dampened the market for poults. Hatching was curtailed and a surplus of hatching eggs developed. Hatcheries reporting on poults showed a 20 percent decrease in poults hatched during the first 7 months of this year compared with the same months in 1946. Comments from turkey growers indicate that poult losses have been smaller than usual.

The heaviest reductions in turkeys this year were made by large producers. However, even in this group some growers reported a substantial increase in their flocks. Many growers went out of the turkey business entirely.

EARLY MARKETINGS EXPECTED

Turkey marketings are expected to be earlier than usual and the proportion to be marketed before November is even larger than the record proportion during that period last year. If growers' intentions are realized, marketings in October and earlier will be the largest in 12 years of record. Growers expect to market 25.1 percent of their birds before November compared with 22.3 percent last year and 13.3 percent the 1941-45 average. In November this year growers expect to market 40.9 percent of their birds which compares with 36.7 percent marketed during

the month in 1946. High feed prices and the drop in turkey prices late in 1946 are the main factors which influenced producers' intentions toward earlier marketing this year. However, there has been a fairly steady trend toward earlier marketings for the past 8 years because flocks of early birds are easier to raise, have smaller death losses and run less risk of early winter storm losses.

The actual marketing of the crop will depend to a considerable extent upon later developments. Feed costs are expected to continue high and will average higher this fall and winter than a year earlier. Even with a corn crop considerably smaller than last year, however, feed supplies will be adequate to raise birds to maturity. The relation of feed costs to turkey prices will be an important factor this year in the marketing of turkeys. Growers can be expected to market the birds as soon as they are in reasonably good finish to cut feed outlays. In 1946 actual marketings were somewhat later than intended. In 1945, 1943 and 1942 actual marketings were about the same as growers' intentions reported in August, but in 1944 and from 1938 to 1941 inclusive, they were somewhat later.

About 78 percent of the early birds, those marketed in October or earlier, are produced in the West North Central and Western States, where 43 percent and 24 percent respectively of the turkeys marketed fall in this class. About 80 percent of the turkeys produced in the West North Central States are expected to be marketed before December. For the country as a whole about 34 percent of the turkeys are expected to be marketed in December or later.

PROPORTION OF TURKEY CROP MARKETING IN DIFFERENT MONTHS
(Reporters' averages)

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS	1946 Crop				1947 Crop (intended)			
	Oct. or earlier	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or later	Oct. or earlier	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. or later
	Percent							
N. Atlantic	10.7	40.7	35.8	12.8	9.2	46.5	35.5	8.8
E.N. Central	14.7	41.3	31.6	12.4	17.9	44.5	31.2	6.4
W.N. Central	41.5	33.5	18.9	6.1	43.1	36.4	16.3	4.2
S. Atlantic	15.9	34.1	37.7	12.3	15.5	50.3	27.3	6.9
S. Central	3.2	45.4	33.0	18.4	9.7	43.5	35.2	11.6
Western	19.7	33.7	30.0	16.6	23.7	38.6	27.3	10.4
United States	22.3	36.7	28.4	12.6	25.1	40.9	26.2	7.8

The following table on United States marketing of turkeys for the years 1940 through 1947 shows clearly the trend toward early marketings. The October or earlier marketings show a fairly consistent upward trend from the 8.8 percent of the crop for 1940 to 25.1 percent in 1947.

PROPORTION OF UNITED STATES TURKEY CROP MARKETING IN DIFFERENT MONTHS
(Reporters' averages)

Year	Oct. or earlier	November	December	Jan. or later
	Percent			
1947 1/	25.1	40.9	26.2	7.8
1946	22.3	36.7	28.4	12.6
1945	19.6	36.4	30.0	14.0
1944	16.6	38.7	30.9	13.8
1943	10.1	41.1	35.2	13.6
1942	11.8	41.1	36.3	10.8
1941	8.5	39.8	38.9	12.8
1940	8.8	42.1	36.9	12.2

1/ Marketing intentions for 1947.

TURKEYS RAISED ON FARMS 1947, WITH COMPARISONS

State and Division	Average 1939-43	1944	Number raised 1945	1946 1/	Indicated 1947 2/	1947 as % of 1946
			Thousands			Percent
Me.	49	49	59	51	50	98
N.H.	62	71	92	75	73	97
Vt.	139	142	185	174	137	79
Mass.	263	295	354	333	316	95
R.I.	23	30	35	33	33	100
Conn.	117	178	226	212	178	84
N.Y.	439	552	756	756	741	98
N.J.	146	250	375	405	364	90
Pa.	857	1,123	1,460	1,431	1,317	92
N.ATL.	2,096	2,620	3,542	3,470	3,209	92
Ohio	857	979	1,155	1,155	1,097	95
Ind.	411	612	1,010	1,081	919	85
Ill.	584	742	1,002	1,152	1,071	93
Mich.	490	638	1,002	932	792	85
Wis.	458	582	640	614	491	80
E.N.CENT.	2,800	3,553	4,809	4,934	4,370	89
Minn.	3,034	3,183	3,979	4,019	3,336	83
Iowa	1,768	2,312	2,890	3,208	2,566	80
Mo.	1,462	1,532	1,838	1,746	1,310	75
N.Dak.	1,297	802	842	968	871	90
S.Dak.	1,089	413	434	421	295	70
Nebr.	961	850	1,054	1,159	927	80
Kans.	1,129	749	914	896	663	74
W.N.CENT.	10,739	9,841	11,951	12,417	9,968	80
Del.	103	88	101	91	68	75
Md.	398	426	490	466	350	75
Va.	843	986	1,232	1,331	1,065	80
W.Va.	250	320	416	437	398	91
N.C.	242	289	376	421	379	90
S.C.	175	280	420	420	357	85
Ga.	122	144	173	182	182	100
Fla.	108	96	115	115	109	95
S.ATL.	2,240	2,629	3,323	3,463	2,908	84
Ky.	274	231	259	220	165	75
Tenn.	177	151	159	175	140	80
Ala.	147	144	151	151	121	80
Miss.	124	98	100	85	72	85
Ark.	126	132	152	129	72	56
La.	58	46	46	48	46	96
Okla.	1,285	653	686	652	561	86
Tex.	3,954	3,761	4,701	4,231	3,681	87
S.CENT.	6,146	5,216	6,254	5,691	4,858	85
Mont.	226	155	155	170	119	70
Idaho	267	318	398	239	191	80
Wyo.	193	145	173	156	131	84
Colo.	919	861	947	900	765	85
N.Mex.	65	70	80	88	94	107
Ariz.	74	89	102	87	76	87
Utah	1,097	1,642	2,036	1,486	1,263	85
Nev.	41	46	51	46	37	80
Wash.	907	1,299	1,533	1,303	1,121	86
Oreg.	1,863	2,300	3,105	2,049	1,639	80
Calif.	3,456	4,762	5,762	4,610	3,918	85
WEST.	9,109	11,687	14,342	11,134	9,354	84
U.S.	33,130	35,616	44,221	41,109	34,667	84

1/ Revised. 2/ Preliminary estimates as of August 1, 1947.

